



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY FOR
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
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Testimony of the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities Before the Transportation Committee

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HB 6359 AN ACT CONCERNING SNOW REMOVAL AND HANDICAPPED PARKING SPACES.

Good Morning Senator Maynard, Representative Guerrero and members of the Transportation Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the status of handicapped parking in Connecticut and proposed bill **HB 6359 AN ACT CONCERNING SNOW REMOVAL AND HANDICAPPED PARKING SPACES**. This bill would create a fine for placing snow in handicapped parking spaces during the snow removal process.

The large amount of snow that has fallen in Connecticut this year has created inconvenience for everybody, but the difficulties are often experienced disproportionately by people with disabilities. This bill addresses the fact that often, during snow removal, excess snow is plowed or shoveled onto both handicapped spaces and their contiguous access aisles. This is not only inappropriate, but a violation of Titles II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which requires the maintenance of accessible features.

A fine for putting snow in a designated handicapped parking space may act as a deterrent to this practice. It would also constitute a more immediately effective action than the lengthy process of resolving a complaint filed under the ADA.

The Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities (P&A) has been addressing handicapped parking issues since the agency was established in 1977. People with disabilities, family members, contractors and concerned citizens contact P&A for clarification about the requirements for handicapped parking, to lodge complaints about handicapped parking violations and to seek assistance with individual handicapped parking problems.

Today's bill merits careful input, review, and consideration by people with disabilities and other stakeholders. Rather than repeatedly address the same issues year after year, P&A urges the legislature to step back and appoint a Task Force, the majority of which is composed of people with disabilities who use parking permits, to gather information about handicapped parking issues, review the statutes, and develop a comprehensive package of proposals to revise Connecticut's handicapped parking laws.